

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 155

EA 013 608

AUTHOR Smith, Carol Marie
 TITLE Attitude Congruency and Superintendent Service: A Modest Relationship.
 PUB DATE Apr 81
 NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Los Angeles, CA, April 13-17, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; *Community Attitudes; Educational Attainment; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Multiple Regression Analysis; *Occupational Mobility; Political Attitudes; *Social Attitudes; Statistical Analysis; *Superintendents; Tenure

ABSTRACT

An apparent increase in the turnover of superintendents in recent years raises questions as to the possible causes of this situation and as to the characteristics that enhance compatibility between districts and superintendents, encouraging lengthy tenure. A study of 153 public school districts with enrollment between 3,000 and 5,000 attempted to evaluate the effects of superintendents' political and social attitudes on their relationships with their communities. Data were obtained by questionnaire; superintendents were asked to indicate their own feelings, while principals in the same district were asked to assess the attitudes of the local community on the same issues. The results showed that superintendents whose attitudes were congruent with those of their communities were more likely to remain in their positions. When they do move, superintendents tend to seek positions in more urban districts. It is suggested that the amount of education received by superintendents encourages a liberal outlook incompatible with the conservative attitudes of rural communities where superintendents find their first positions. As superintendents move to higher paying jobs in communities with more compatible values, job pressures increase and counteract benefits of attitudinal congruence. Older superintendents display greater conservatism and tend to remain in their positions longer. (PGD)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

C. M. Smith

ATTITUDE CONGRUENCY AND SUPERINTENDENT SERVICE:

A MODEST RELATIONSHIP

Carol Marie Smith

Miami University--Oxford, Ohio

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN-
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT
OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Conceptual Context

This research was an effort to investigate one consequence of the contemporary political turbulence which is disconcerting many school administrators. That consequence is an apparently increasing turnover in the superintendency, meaning the voluntary or involuntary movement of superintendents from district to district (Burlingame, 1977, p. 6). Of course, the initial questions are whether there is a growing turnover rate and, more importantly, what some possible causal factors of turnover may be. A final question must broach a more practical issue: In which kind of district with what kind of superintendent is lengthy tenure likely to be achieved?

The expressed idea of vulnerability in the superintendency began most noticeably with the ubiquitous Willard Waller (orig. 1932, 1970) and has continued as a theme in the educational administration literature. Waller wrote:

It seems worthwhile to point out that this insecurity of the school executive inheres in the nature of his relationship to the community . . . one in which alienation is always implicit, and the alienation begins to work at once when he appears in the community, but reaches its culminating point two or three years later. (p. 270) (See also Gross, Mason, & McEachern, 1958; Callahan, 1962, p. 255; Carlson, 1972, p. 144; Lortie, 1977, p. 25.)

In one sense, superintendents have been externally vulnerable since the emergence of their profession in the mid-nineteenth century (Tyack, 1972, pp. 241-242). They have always had to function under conditions of high visibility, lack of permanent contract, incessant and conflicting demands, and scarce resources (Callahan, 1962, chap. 8; Cuban, 1976b). But, in actuality, superintendents by the mid-twentieth century had managed to carve for themselves more secure niches (Corwin, 1965, p. 248), protected by municipal reforms and by their professional and apolitical ideology (Iannaccone, 1967). Typical career paths followed an orderly progression from teacher to principal to possible central-office position (Griffiths, 1966, p. 48). While the career path is still the same, in the sixties and seventies the security of the position has been eroded markedly (Wirt, 1976, pp. 81-83). That is why turnover is a matter of concern in the eighties.

An important question for this study was whether or not an extraordinarily high turnover rate exists in the superintendency. Two recent state studies did

indicate that the phenomenon of accelerating turnover is a reality. A Michigan Department of Education, reported by Fultz (1976), documented that 70% of the dismissals in Michigan had occurred during the last five years of the ten-year time span being analyzed (p. 42). Burlingame's Illinois study (1977) substantiated the general research consensus that about 20% of all superintendents will be in a new position each year (pp. 8, 22);¹ his trend analysis data projected a slight continuing increase through 1981 (p. 24).

Another crucial question concerned why rapid turnover occurs. The more general determinants of turnover have been assessed in the professional and scholarly literature as both external and internal in origin. One internal strand, the profession's orthodoxy, emphasizes the necessity for particular personal attributes which build toward an ideal, heroic image; Tyack (1976) suggested that such convictions function to create "an aristocracy of character" (p. 259). Burlingame (1977) noted a related external problem, organizational in nature: superintendents as individuals and school boards as units are unclear about their respective roles and conflicting expectations result (pp. 11-13).

A final external strand, a political one, stresses the importance of the larger environment. That environment provides the context for individual action; it shapes the possibilities for success and sometimes predetermines failure. For instance, Lutz and Iannaccone (1970, 1978) have evolved a mid-level theory that conflicts over educational values in changing communities result in the involuntary departure of incumbent boards and superintendents. In his conclusions Cuban (1976a) found that "the impact of the larger environment was a critical element in explaining why superintendents survived or departed. 'Larger environment' referred to the dominant socioeconomic trends, intellectual climates, and political movements that marked particular periods of time and created a local context" (p. 167).

¹Fultz summarized the importance of district size as a predictor of turnover as follows: "Enrollment size makes it a numbers game--sometimes. Superintendents in school districts enrolling 2,500 to 5,000 or more than 10,000 are most susceptible to termination. But those who administer districts with enrollments of fewer than 1,000 or with the range between 5,000 or 10,000 are less likely to lose their jobs" (p. 42). On the other hand, Burlingame pinpointed the "safest" superintendency in the 1500-1999 enrollment range. He found the very largest and the very smallest districts the most prone to hazard (p. 21). Size, not type of district, was critical.

In other words, there is an interactive relationship among superintendents, their respective communities, and the world-at-large. This study attempted to isolate a portion of that external environment--value orientation in individual communities (Boyd, 1976, p.551)--in order to examine a possible causal factor in superintendent turnover. It was an empirical analysis of the match in several contemporary social and political attitudes and values between superintendents and their communities. Specifically, it explored by survey the effect upon tenure of a possible gap between the personal values of highly educated superintendents and the commonly-held conservative values of many smaller American communities. The research hypothesis predicted that an increase in congruence would associate positively with length of service in an incumbent position.

An Everett Ladd article (1978) prompted the original speculation regarding the possibility of attitude and value discrepancy in the political and social spheres as an antecedent condition contributing to turnover. Ladd's secondary analysis revealed a growing gap in clusterings of attitudes which pits an "intelligentsia" against a "bourgeoisie" in the enormous middle class. The gap is demarked by educational attainment, and the new groupings represent new versions of liberalism and conservatism. Notably, superintendents belong through accreditation in the former category and work professionally in the latter. However, unlike most professionals, who simply provide a service, superintendents are intimately connected to the economic, social, and political mosaic of their communities. An inherent incompatibility in basic life philosophies could easily aggravate the delicate relationship between a superintendent and a community.

Several kinds of assumptions underlay the conceptualization of this research: the accessibility of attitudes and values for empirical research, a confidence in the liberalizing effects of higher education, and the legitimacy of defining "community" as a social network rather than a place. The research relied heavily on the ideas that there is an underlying consistency in an individual's attitudes and values (Festinger, 1957) and that particular social groupings reflect unique value orientations (Rokeach, 1973). These statements are not extravagant but they are crucial.

Methodology

A national random sampling (278) of public school districts within the 3,000-5,000 enrollment range (1,583) resulted in a 70% response rate from participating districts and 153 cases (56%) for causal analysis. This enrollment stratum was

selected because districts within it are small enough to contain communities with a tendency toward homogeneity in attitudes and values and large enough to have five to seven member schools from whose principals a community assessment might be drawn. The range was also identified in the Michigan State study as one of the two strata where superintendents are most susceptible to termination (Fultz, 1976, p. 42). Thus, turbulence as a phenomenon should have existed a priori and should have provided the variance necessary to identify a relationship if it were present.

While the widespread geography of the sampled districts increased the generalizability of any results within that stratum, one obvious limitation of the sampling design was the fact that the chosen range incorporated only 10% of the United States school districts. However, given an assumption of increasing homogeneity in attitudes and values in smaller districts, the results of this study might reasonably be extended to all districts below the 5,000 enrollment range, encompassing 80% of all public school districts.

The use of special populations in this research was, of course, intentional. There was no problem about using superintendents to study superintendents, but the choice of an informant population for the communities was another matter. Assuming that a generalizable community ethos existed, there was a serious question about who might best assess or conceptualize that ethos. It should be emphasized that the value match sought was that of the personally held values of a given superintendent with the perceived values in his community. Principals were selected as the informant population because they were more accessible (superintendents forwarded the questionnaires internally) and because their biases would vary systematically in an assumed direction.

The virtues of concentrating on a precise organizational level in a school district, rather than citizens-at-large, were two-fold. The principals were representative because they, by virtue of their positions, are forced to take an holistic view of community and may be expected to have considerable knowledge about it. Their responses were standardized because they focus on the same elements in the environment, have the same knowledge base, and are similarly articulate (Seidler, 1974, p. 819). While the principals' view is selective and even simplistic in political terms (i.e., largely ignoring non-parent interests like government agencies and business interests [Mann, 1975, p. 95]), it is valid in social-psychological terms.

One superintendent return and three to seven principal returns from a given district comprised each case for the causal analysis. A new variable, congruence, represented the correlation (r) of individual superintendent scores with coordinate principal mean scores on a fourteen-item, factor-analyzed attitude index. The questions were drawn from the 1977 codebook of the General Social Surveys (NORC). The choice was simplified by beginning with the nine items Ladd (1978) found most useful in his discussion of liberalism/conservatism and education, and then choosing others that seemed relevant. These were submitted to factor analysis, using the subfiles of the General Social Surveys as the data base.

The factor analysis evolved four factors or dimensions of what might be called the American core culture. They were essentially neutral constructs which frame groups of issues and/or sets of values. The dimensions and their associated indicators follow:

<u>FREEDOMS</u>	FEHOME	(right of women to contribute outside home)
	SPKATH	(right of atheist to speak in community)
	COLATH	(right of atheist to teach in college)
	RACMAR	(right of interracial marriage)
<u>SEXUALITY</u>	ABNOMORE	(abortion)
	HOMOSEX	(homosexuality)
	PREMARSEX	(premarital sexuality)
	XMARSEX	(adultery)
	PORNLAU	(pornography)
<u>FINANCE</u>	RACOPEN	(open housing)
	NATFARE	(welfare)
	NATAID	(foreign aid--nonmilitary)
<u>DEFENSE</u>	NATARMS	(military arms)
	NATSPAC	(space program)

The questions on the superintendents' questionnaire were written in precisely the same manner as they appeared in the codebook. Those on the principals' questionnaire were rewritten in terms of "how the community would respond if a given topic became a salient or meaningful issue within the bounds of the locale." The other questions on each of the two questionnaires provided information needed to establish equivalency among districts, demographic data, and items intended to explore the concepts of tenure and community.

Probably, the most significant limitation of the questionnaire was the unmeasurable effect of changing the item wording in the attitude section of the principals' questionnaire in order to garner their "informed opinions" about community attitudes. Since there is no way accurately to assess the probability

of this source of error, I simply presumed that any matched items were measuring, at the very least, the same content domain. Furthermore, it was assumed that the district mean scores on the attitudes were no more than gross estimations. The index was created primarily for statistical purposes, not to make definite statements about attitudes in smaller American communities.

The primary hypothesis was tested by means of the Pearson r and partial correlations. Further elaboration included cross-tabulations, t -tests, and regression analysis. Special consideration was given to the extent of heterogeneity in districts and inter-rater reliability.

Results

Relevant demographic variables concerning superintendents can best be presented in a form comparative with the Knezevich study of the superintendency for AASA (1971). The statistics in Table 1 were taken from his weighted profiles for Group B (enrollments 3,000-24,999), the category most comparable to superintendents in this study. They provided some basis for observations on longitudinal change in the superintendency and on the validity of the study.

TABLE 1
A COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AMONG SUPERINTENDENTS

Variable	Present survey	AASA survey
1. Mean age	49.5 years	49.7 years
2. Mean age at first superintendency	38.7 years	38.5 years
3. In initial superintendency	61%	45%
4. Median tenure in position	6.5 years	4-5 years
5. Median number of positions held	1.3 positions	2 positions
	<u>N</u> = 177	239

One was immediately aware that, while the age variables were similar, there was lower mobility among the superintendents in this study. Part of the difference may somehow be attributable to the discrepancy in the enrollment ranges, but the degree of stability was somewhat surprising in view of an expected turbulence.

In addition, incumbents had indicated that nearly half of their predecessors were involuntarily dismissed or reassigned.

In terms of SES variables, superintendents classed themselves as 44% middle class and 53% upper-middle class (cf. the documented lower-middle class origins of many of these men). Thirty-three percent of them labeled themselves as Democrats, 15% as Independents, and 51% as Republicans (cf. the overwhelming Republican loyalties reported by Carlson, 1972). Fifty-one percent of the men perceived themselves as slightly to extremely conservative (cf. only 19% who labeled themselves even slightly liberal).

Table 2 presents a breakdown on the educational attainments of this group and again includes the Knezevich statistics (1971) for comparison. The large percentages of advanced degrees attested to the facts of increased or increasing credentialing requirements and to the probability of prolonged exposure to liberalizing ideas.

TABLE 2
TERMINAL DEGREES OF SUPERINTENDENTS

Degree	Frequency	Percentage	(Knezevich) percentage
1. B.A., B.S., A.B.	2	1.1	2.9
2. M.A., M.S., M.L.	60	34.1	49.6
3. 6th year, Ed.S.	38	21.6	12.9
4. Ph.D., Ed.D.	76	43.2	26.3
5. Postdoctoral	--	----	7.9
<u>N</u> =	177	100.0	100.0

The demographic information concerning the 153 communities which formed the basis of the causal analysis was typical of rural, small town, and suburban areas. (These became the primary categories for this control variable.) The following data were based upon means derived from the responding principals in all districts. Forty percent of the communities were listed as working-class (on a 5-point scale) and 47% as middle-class. Seventy-two percent of the communities were composed

primarily of high school graduates, while 16% had some college, and 5% were elite communities where a bachelor's degree was the norm. The party identification variable split almost evenly between Democratic (41%) and Republican (49%) orientations. Concerning political views, 10% of the communities were perceived as moderate, 68% as slightly conservative, and 20% as conservative.

The primary hypothesis, testing the relationship between attitude congruence and years of service could not be run until that former variable had been created. Table 3 presents the congruency scale which was built from the correlations of individual superintendents' answers and coordinate principal responses:

TABLE 3
ESTIMATES OF CONGRUENCE BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENTS
AND THEIR DISTRICTS

Correlation (r)	Frequency	Percentage
(1) -.50 to -.25	3	2.0
(2) -.25 to 0.00	12	7.8
(3) .0001 to .25	37	24.2
(4) .25 to .50	48	31.4
(5) .50 to .75	43	28.1
(6) .75 to 1.0	10	6.5
	Total = 153	100.0
$\bar{X}$ = 3.95 or .237		
Median = 4.01 or .252		

This scale, while somewhat skewed, possessed adequate variance for statistical analysis. Correlations of congruence below .25 were considered to be weak or nonexistent (N = 52); correlations between .25 and .50 were labeled moderate (N = 48); and correlations above .50 were identified as strong (N = 53).

Three brief tables were of related interest: the estimates of heterogeneity in the communities, the sizes of the principals' groups, and the reliability of the raters. Table 4 follows:

TABLE 4
PRINCIPALS' ESTIMATES OF HETEROGENEITY IN
THEIR COMMUNITIES

		Frequency	Percentage
Homogeneity	1.0	0	0.0
	1.5	1	0.7
	2.0	25	16.3
	2.5	48	31.4
	3.0	49	32.0
	3.5	20	13.1
	4.0	8	5.2
	4.5	2	1.3
Heterogeneity	5.0	0	0.0
Total =		153	100.0
$\bar{X} = 2.8$			

The extent of heterogeneity in the communities legitimately raised a question concerning whether an analysis was even possible. Table 4 showed that, for the most part, the principals classed their communities on the homogeneous side of the continuum (80%). About 50% of them estimated that their population was stable or increasing but with the same values. About 36% saw an influx of newcomers with differing values, but among all of the districts the median for the amount of change in any direction in the last fifteen years was only 21%.

Table 5 was intriguing for the unexpectedly high rate of response in the larger groups. One was lead to speculate about the motivating factors: superintendent influence, high morale, regional variation?

TABLE 5
NUMBER OF DISTRICTS
PER PRINCIPAL GROUP

Group	Number
(3)	18
(4)	34
(5)	39
(6)	33
(7)	29
Total =	153

Table 6 presents the inter-rater reliability ratings:

TABLE 6
RELIABILITY RATINGS OF DISTRICTS
IN CAUSAL ANALYSIS

Coefficient	Frequency	Percentage
(1) .40 to .50	1	0.7
(2) .50 to .60	4	2.6
(3) .60 to .70	6	3.9
(4) .70 to .80	14	9.2
(5) .80 to .90	42	27.5
(6) .90 to 1.0	86	56.2
Total = 153		100.0
Mean = 5.28 or .828		
Median = 5.61 or .861		

Table 6 built confidence that the averaged scores of the principals were meaningful; that is, the social-psychological characters of the various communities had been delineated with reasonable consensus. Eighty-four percent of the districts rated better than .80.² In sum, these tables meant that, not only were the sampled communities clustered toward the homogeneous end of the continuum, but the principals, as individuals, were in singular agreement concerning the judgments which they were making. Not unexpectedly, reliability related negatively to heterogeneity in different communities ($r = -0.26$, $p < .001$).

The primary hypothesis stated that the more congruent in social and political attitudes a superintendent and his community were, the longer that superintendent

²Shahla Hamidsadeh, a consultant with the Academic Computer Services at Miami University suggested using Cronbach's alpha model for the reliability estimates. I am indebted to her for her able assistance throughout the analysis phase of the study.

would likely have served. After the congruence and reliability variables had been created, the main hypothesis could be tested by the Pearson's r correlation. Congruence was the key independent variable; years of service was the dependent variable. The final run involved 142 of the original 153 cases. Eleven cases were deleted because of unreliable data. As the scale in Table 6 indicated, there was a natural breaking point at reliability .70, which determined how many cases reasonably should be omitted. The result of the primary correlation was:

$$r = 0.2280, p < .003.$$

The correlation was a modest one, but it did have some substantive significance. It suggested that moderately coherent configurations of attitudes existed and that, in some measure, they related to length of service in a given superintendency.

While a single correlation is an efficient mode of transferring information, it may obscure the conditions under which the relationship may vary. Regression analysis was used to investigate the original correlation. Preliminary analysis indicated an overwhelming multicollinear effect from age; therefore, the SPSS stepwise regression procedure was employed, forcing age in last. While the summary table would be nearly the same for the forced entry of all listed variables, the variables other than age could enter the equation first, being free of the latter's multicollinear effect. Only the contribution to R^2 would change. Table 7 presents the variables in order of importance before age was entered. Table 8 records the changes that occurred when age was added:

TABLE 7

REGRESSION ANALYSIS (SPSS) BEFORE AGE IS ENTERED

Variable	<u>B</u> value	Standard error of <u>B</u>	<u>F</u>	Beta
CONGURU (Congruence)	4.284*	1.767	5.88	0.212
MEDAUTH (Mediative-authoritative orientation)	0.593	0.511	1.35	0.099
URBRURAS (Urban-rural location)	-1.378	1.122	1.51	-0.104
TERMD (Terminal degree of superintendent)	0.774	0.634	1.49	0.103
POLVIEWS (Political views of superintendent)	0.533	0.471	1.28	0.101
POLVIEWC (Political views of community)	-0.153	0.881	0.03	-0.015
R^2 (variance) = 11%				

12

*B = 2 x standard error, therefore significant.

TABLE 8
REGRESSION ANALYSIS (SPSS) AFTER AGE IS ENTERED

Variable	<u>B</u> value	Standard error of <u>B</u>	<u>F</u>	Beta
CONGURU	1.892	1.537	1.54	0.094
MEDAUTH	0.738	0.434	2.89	0.124
URBRURAS	0.803	0.975	0.01	0.006
TERMD	0.905	0.538	2.83	0.121
POLVIEWS	0.660	0.400	2.72	0.126
POLVIEWC	-0.228	0.748	0.09	-0.022
AGE	0.441*	0.061	50.55	0.531
R^2 (variance) = 37%				

*B = 2 x standard error, therefore significant.

The results were interesting for several reasons. First, the impact of adding "age of superintendent" to the equation ($F = 50.55$) was immediately apparent, as was the increase in the variance accounted for: from 11% to 37%. (Accounting for 20% of the variance in a dependent variable is generally considered to be large in social science research.) Furthermore, each of the F values, which showed the relative statistical significance of a given variable as a part of a specified group, shifted considerably. A key point to be noted was that, without the confounding effect of age, congruence emerged as the only significant variable ($p < .01$) related to tenure, building confidence that it was a consequential factor.

Table 9 provides the zero-order partial correlations for key variables in the study:

TABLE 9
PARTIAL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS--ZERO-ORDER PARTIALS

	CONGRU	YRSSERV	AGE	COMBASE	TERMD	POLVIEWS	EXPEND	NUMSUPER	LOCALCOS	MEDAUTH	REACTINI	URBRURAS
CONGRU (Congruence between superintendent and community)	1.0000	0.2529*	0.2339*	-0.0282	-0.0071	0.3051*	-0.0293	-0.0781	-0.0781	0.0664	-0.0822	-0.0915
YRSSERV (Years of service in current position)	0.2529*	1.0000	0.5358*	0.0248	0.0787	0.1483*	0.0140	-0.0372	-0.0596	0.1328	0.0054	-0.1253
AGE (Age of superintendent)	0.2339*	0.5358*	1.0000	0.0311	-0.0057	-0.0106	0.1660*	0.1396	-0.2991*	-0.0336	-0.1094	-0.2464*
COMBASE (Heterogeneity in community)	-0.0182	0.0248	0.0311	1.0000	0.1276	-0.0432	0.1734*	0.1047	-0.1169	-0.0996	0.2656*	-0.0131
TERMD (Terminal degree of superintendent)	-0.0071	0.0787	-0.0057	0.1276	1.0000	-0.1601*	-0.1064	-0.0078	0.0170	0.0021	-0.0756	0.0907
POLVIEWS (Political views of superintendent)	0.3051*	0.1483*	-0.0106	-0.0432	-0.1601*	1.0000	-0.1458*	0.0478	0.0380	0.2312*	0.0325	0.0527
EXPEND (Expenditure per child in district)	-0.0293	0.0140	0.1660*	0.1734*	-0.1064	-0.1458*	1.0000	0.0733	-0.1162	-0.0842	0.1064	-0.3292*
NUMSUPER (Number of superin- tendencies)	-0.0781	-0.0372	0.1396	0.1047	-0.0078	0.0478	0.0733	1.0000	0.0576	0.0309	-0.0248	-0.1750*
LOCALCOS (Local-cosmopolitan orientation)	-0.1346	-0.1595	-0.2991*	-0.1169	0.0170	0.0380	-0.1162	0.0576	1.0000	0.1428	0.1188	0.2385*
MEDAUTH (Mediative-authorita- tive orientation)	0.0664	0.1328	-0.0336	-0.0996	0.0021	0.2312*	-0.0842	0.0309	0.1428	1.0000	0.1857*	0.0697
REACTINI (Reactive-initiative orientation)	-0.0822	0.0054	-0.0194	0.2656*	-0.0756	0.0325	0.1064	-0.0248	0.1188	0.1857*	1.0000	0.0686
URBRURAS (Urban-rural location)	-0.0916	-0.1253	-0.2464*	-0.0131	0.0907	0.0527	-0.3292*	-0.1750*	0.2385*	0.0697	0.0686	1.0000

* p < .05.

In the regression analysis the primary correlation between congruence in attitudes and years of service moved from .23 to .25. The strength of the correlation between age and years of service (.53) was again notable; the correlation between age and congruence (.23) was much more moderate. That heterogeneity in a community and, therefore, urbanness related positively with expenditure per child in the district (.17 and .32) was to be expected, given findings in the political science literature. That higher educational degrees associated with liberality (.16) was consistent with Ladd's assumptions.

Two groups of correlations were of particular interest: one set redefined the idea of mobility in the superintendency; the other underscored the importance of occupational press. The first was the interrelationship of age with urbanness (.24), which suggested that the older the individual, the less likely he was to be in a rural district; and the interrelationship of urbanness with the number of superintendencies an individual was likely to have held (.17), which indicated that the more urban the district, the more likely there would be a careerbound superintendent. However, in this sample age did not correlate significantly with the number of superintendencies held (.13). These data may explain, in part, why there is a good deal of movement in the superintendency but little vertical mobility in terms of progressive movements toward districts with larger enrollments. Among a significant portion of the superintendents sampled there was a detectable migration toward more urban districts within the same enrollment stratum. This drift toward a more urban environment might, therefore, be interpreted as a different kind of vertical mobility; it might be a movement toward communities more philosophically congruent. Certainly, the increasing percentage of doctorates among superintendents is supporting evidence that more liberal mindsets are being consistently reinforced.

The second set of correlations involved age, political views, congruence, and years of service. Increasing conservatism (political views) and increasing age related positively to congruence (.30 and .23). This was reasonable in view of the pervasive conservatism of the communities that these men serve, combined with the normally detectable conservatism which associates with advancing age. Likewise, both conservatism and age related positively to years of service (.14 and .53).

Of intriguing interest was the fact that age did not relate to increasing conservatism in the group of men ($r = -.01$). This was to be expected in a sample which is composed of older men (over 35) who have already shifted significantly

on the political philosophical continuum. It did not explain why the positive relationship (increasing conservatism) suddenly showed up again in regard to years of service, which correlated so strongly with age. One possible interpretation is structural ossification; that is, the bureaucratic nature of the school system sets into motion an increasing conservatism which goes beyond simple age.³

In conclusion, several ideas may be drawn from the foregoing elaboration. First, there are configurations of attitudes among superintendents and within communities which are measurable. While these configurations have endless subtle variations, the responses did not produce random patterns which could not be correlated. Furthermore, a consistency or harmony in attitudes on social and political issues between a superintendent and his community relates modestly to tenure for that superintendent. The specific attitudes toward specific issues are less important than a congruence in underlying dimensions which reflect value judgments.

Second, the entire concept of congruence is inextricably mixed with age because age usually associates with conservatism in the individual, and smaller communities are typically conservative. The anomaly in the relationship for superintendents is that service in a school district (or occupational press) contributes to that increased conservatism (and, therefore, congruence) rather than the aging process.

Third, while the demographic data suggested that the superintendents in this stratum are not especially mobile, the correlations show that internal movement does exist. This research supports an hypothesis that the movement is comprehensible, in part, in terms of value congruence and incongruence; a migration toward more urban communities is a migration toward more liberal contexts. Such an idea also points to a plausible reason for the documented high turnover in the smallest of districts. Such districts are likely to be rural and intensely conservative and inherently incompatible with men who intentionally train for the superintendency with long years in academe.

(When the rural cases were selected out as a special population on which to run the research hypothesis, the .23 correlation shot up to .53 ($p < .001$)--a clear

³I am grateful to Theodore C. Wagenaar, a professor of sociology at Miami University, for this insight.

case of specification.)

Fourth, as a kind of footnote, crosstabulations revealed that there are regional variations in average tenures, with the North Central region evidencing the shortest (44% in 0-4 years of service in a given district) and the Northeast region evidencing the longest (47% in 9-30 year terms). The less populous regions of the West, South, and Southwest really demonstrated no pattern. Since the two major studies looking at superintendent turnover were conducted in Michigan and Illinois, it is quite possible that their results were unrepresentative and somewhat misleading about the high incidence of turnover on a national basis.

Conclusions

In actuality, this study ended up contributing little to knowledge in terms of traditional political concerns. The effects of the community control variables (type of government, type of power structure, and type of political climate) on length of service were obscure. None attained significance ($p < .05$) in the cross-tabulations. Of course, there was no attempt to tie into the policy process nor into the linkages between the several levels of government.

Most specifically, the study resulted in a rejection of the null hypothesis which stated that there would be no difference in the lengths of tenure for those superintendents who were assessed as congruent with their communities and those who were not. Congruence in social and political attitudes does relate modestly to tenure ($r = .23$, $p < .003$). The relationship is even more salient in the rural districts ($r = .53$, $p < .001$), as compared to the small town and suburban ones. Furthermore, of the "survivors" (superintendents aged 55-66 who have been in their positions over nine years), 63% are highly congruent with their communities.

Of course, the congruence defined and tested in this study is really an heuristic construct which underscores the assumption that a compatibility in underlying values concerning the quality of life is helpful in any relationship, including that relationship between a superintendent and citizens in his community. The observation is not new. On the other hand, applying the perspective of social and political attitudes and values to that assumption does lead to some illuminations. For instance, it does provide one plausible explanation for the heretofore seemingly aimless movements of superintendents among smaller districts. Knezevich (1971) observed that those in districts with less than 3,000 pupils enrolled were literally "going round in circles," moving from one district to another of about the same size (p. 38). It must be remembered that he is talking about 70% of the districts in the United States.

The mobility pattern which appeared in this study was a movement from the rural districts toward the more urban within a single enrollment stratum. It is a kind of upward mobility in terms of more desirable and/or compatible community contexts for careerbound superintendents. This pattern is not applicable to placebound superintendents who are "insiders" and already in harmony with community values and expectations nor to superintendents whose initial positions are in more urban settings. This pattern applies to those men who take positions in more rural districts because that is where more job opportunities lie.

An obvious question then is what factors motivate them to move. One immediate answer is the lure of higher salaries. Indeed, the data in this study showed a .33 correlation between urbanness and expenditure per child, which undoubtedly reflects higher superintendent salaries in more urban areas. But if money were the single, all-powerful motivation, then movement vertically into larger enrollment districts would be the more productive way to go. (See Knezevich, 1971, p. 38 on superintendent salaries.)

The factor suggested by this research is that, given the opportunity, superintendents will move to districts whose basic social and political values harmonize with their own. Of course, the choice situation is reversible: school boards, especially in the smaller districts, select superintendents who are like themselves, who will fit in as integral community members. That is why being conservative is important. That is why the increased liberalism which may accompany advanced schooling (and does, statistically significantly, in this study) may plant the seeds of discontent in novice superintendents who happen to locate in rural districts. There may be an inherent incompatibility.

Such a condition could then explain the migration toward more urban districts, toward more compatible community contexts. The press in the occupation, however, eventually mitigates this attraction. The surviving superintendent internalizes again the conservative values, and a necessary accommodation is achieved.

The possibilities for future research efforts are limitless. Comparative research on urban and rural districts is nearly non-existent. Superintendents as individuals in a unique occupational position have been essentially ignored by political scientists and sociologists. Much has been written by education people on how superintendents ought to behave; little has been recorded on how they do behave. No one has yet defined "the successful superintendent" in empirical terms. The whole idea of values can be investigated at all levels of

the educational institution. Since the spate of community power studies, few efforts have appeared elucidating the nature of community with an eye to improving linkages to (and, therefore, support of) the school system.

Perhaps, David Tyack best summarized where educational research must ultimately move, widening its scope beyond administration and even politics. He (1976) wrote: "... the integration of an educational system exists not simply in organizational charts and in allocations of power and responsibility but also in the understandings in peoples' minds" (p. 261). He wasn't talking about research, but he was talking about schools. Successful superintendents by instinct, by training, or by accommodation become sensitive to all three kinds of knowledge. Successful researchers are still in the problem-finding stage; but, hopefully, the questions will become more intelligible as we proceed.

Policy Implications

(1) This set of data emphasizes the importance to the practitioner of developing community awareness, in addition to self-awareness and professional awareness. More precisely, academic programs should stress the development of social and political acumen among their students. Besides administrative and curricular writings, the would-be school executive should read sociology, psychology, political science, and communication theory. Indeed, as Corwin (1974) has noted: "The test of an administrator's skill today is no longer the ability to manage the internal operations of the school system. The real test is his ability to relate effectively to external pressure groups without becoming a puppet" (p. 41). This skill is relevant in both urban and rural districts; its development is crucial and delicate. The success or failure of a superintendent's relationship with a district can, in large measure, be predicated upon this community sensitivity.

(2) Another programmatic adjustment involves heightening the awareness of aspiring administrators concerning differences between urban and rural settings. A lack of understanding about rural districts, where most job opportunities lie, is a serious handicap. According to Zeigler, Jennings, and Peak (1974), rural districts mirror the reverse image of urban districts. For instance, because of a more homogeneous population and shared social values, the board will tend to be consensual, rather than politicized. Furthermore, while rural boards do not oppose superintendents often, when they do, they are effective. The protections of technical expertise and bureaucratic layers are not functional where community demands are crystallized and desires are enforceable. Certainly, this research

pointed to a need to understand the conservative value structure of a rural community. Consciousness of the urban-rural dichotomy ought to be directly injected into programs in educational administration. The current practice is to concentrate on urban problems and solutions.

(3) The awareness in the practitioners' literature of personal characteristics as the key to success, as contrasted to professional skills, is not simply folklore. It finds its basis in the experiences of the thousands of chief executives in smaller districts. In the larger urban district the personal impact of the superintendent is less important than his professional ability to control organization³ and environmental turbulence.⁴ His mode of communication for community relations is the media, not face-to-face contact. Additionally, his personal value matrix is not only acceptable to some stratum in his environment, but of trivial importance where the community has become accustomed to tolerating a welter of philosophies.

But the small district superintendent must rely more on his own wits and personal attraction. He cannot hide behind a bureaucracy. The reality of this situation explains the emphasis in the profession upon tact, the ability to get along with people, and exemplary behavior. It is an occasion of the reversed image again. The more rural superintendents, who are the more numerous superintendents, need to cultivate personal relations, while the more urban superintendents need to sharpen their professional techniques. Neither set of skills can be ignored but different emphases are required.

Postscript

The answer to the question "In which kind of district with what kind of superintendent is lengthy tenure likely to be achieved" lies buried in the two ambiguous words "It depends." In terms of this research, it depends upon consciousness of one's own value structure, awareness of community characteristics, size and location of district, political acuity, and personal goals. And it helps to be conservative.

⁴I expect that an inability to handle such turbulence and a concomitant administrator burnout are major causes of turnover in the urban districts. (See Cuban, 1976a.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boyd, W. The public, the professionals, and educational policy-making: Who governs? Teachers College Record, 1976, 77, p39-577.
- Burlingame, M. An exploratory study of turnover and career modility of public school administrators in the state of Illinois (Report No. C-128, State Board of Education). Springfield, Ill.: Illinois Office of Education, 1977. (ERIC Document Reporduction Service No. 152 462)
- Callahan, R. Education and the cult of efficiency. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Carlson, R. School superintendents: Careers and performance. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1972.
- Corwin, R. A sociology of education. New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1965.
- Corwin, R. Education in crisis. New York: Wiley, 1974.
- Cuban, L. Urban school chiefs under fire. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. (a)
- Cuban, L. The urban school superintendency: A century and a half of change. Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976. (b)
- Festinger, L. A theory of cognitive dissonance. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957.
- Fultz, D. Eight ways superintendents lose their jobs. American School Board Journal, 1976, 63(9), 42, 51.
- Griffiths, D. The school superintendent. New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1966.
- Gross, N., Mason, W., & McEachern, A. Explorations in role analysis: Studies of the school superintendency role. New York: Wiley, 1958.
- Iannaccone, L. Politics in education. New York: Center for Applied Studies, 1967.
- Knezevich, S. (Ed.). The American school superintendent. Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1971.
- Ladd, E., Jr. The new lines are drqwn: Class and ideology in America. Public Opinion, 1978, July/August, pp. 48-53.
- Lortie, D. Two anomalies and three perspectives: Some observations on school organization. In R. G. Corwin & R. A. Edelfelt, Perspectives on organizations: The school as a social organization. Washington, D.C.: AACTE, 1977.
- Lutz, F., & Iannaccone, L. (Eds.). Public participation in local school districts. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington-Heath, 1978.

Mann, D. School administrators as political representatives. In F. Wirt (Ed.), The polity of the school: New research in educational politics. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington-Heath, 1975.

Rokeach, M. The nature of human values. New York: Free Press, 1973.

Seidler, J. On using informants: Technique for collecting quantitative data and controlling measurement error in organization analysis. American Sociological Review, 1974, 39(6), 816-831.

Tyack, D. The "one best system": A historical analysis. In H. V. Walberg & A. T. Kagan (Eds.), Rethinking urban education. San Francisco: Jossey-bass, 1972.

Tyack, D. Pilgrim's progress: Toward a social history of the school superintendency, 1860-1960. History of Education Quarterly, 1976, 16(3), 257-300.

Waller, W. The school and the community--II. In W. Goods, F. Furstenberg, Jr., & L. Mitchel (Eds.), On the family, education, and war. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Wirt, F. Political turbulence and administrative authority in the schools. In L. H. Masotti & R. L. Lineberry (Eds.), The new urban politics. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1976.

Zeigler, L, Jennings, M., & Peak, W. Governing American schools: Political interaction in local school districts. North Scituate, Mass.: Duxberry, 1974.